

# Weigh to Go! Week 4: Plenty of produce

**WEIGH TO GO!, Marianne Carter** 3:46 p.m. EDT March 24, 2014

Ask someone what comes to mind when he or she hears the word “diet,” and the response undoubtedly will involve deprivation and restriction. But what if there were foods you could eat more of in order to lose weight?

There are: fruits and vegetables. We’ve all heard that they’re good for us, but they’re also award-winning when it comes to weight management.

How does eating more of something help you lose weight?

There are several factors that contribute to the slimming effect of produce. First, our body doesn’t signal us that we’re full when we’ve reached our calorie limit for the meal. This communication of satiety only occurs when we consume a certain volume of food – that is, when our stomach feels full.

Fruits and vegetables are naturally high in water and fiber. They’re also relatively low in calories. As a result, they give you more “fullness” with fewer calories. For example, compare two slices of bacon with an apple. Both contain approximately 90 calories. Bacon is primarily fat and has no fiber – it won’t produce the same feeling of fullness as a fiber-rich apple.

Why? Fiber expands in our stomach, which is what gives us the sensation of fullness. So, you’ll feel full with fewer calories by incorporating more fruits and vegetables into your diet. You’ll also get more “bang” for your nutritional buck by eating more nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables.

For the same number of calories (400), you could eat one slice of apple pie or consume five apples. A small serving of peach crisp (300 calories) is the calorie-equivalent of eating five peaches. A large serving of McDonald’s fries (500 calories) has the same number of calories as four baked potatoes.

At the same time that obesity is on the rise, studies show that most Americans are not meeting the recommended intake of fruits and vegetables. How much do we need daily? In general, adults need a combined total of nine to 13 servings of

fruits/vegetables per day.

Sound impossible? It's not – the serving sizes are small, and there are lots of ways to sneak in produce throughout the day. For more ideas and recipes, visit [fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](https://fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org).

This week, work on trying to increase your consumption of fruits and vegetables. Look at what you're currently doing and work on gradually increasing your intake. More is better – that's the goal.

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#### 10 simple ways to boost your produce intake

- Top your morning cereal with a banana, strawberries or blueberries.
- Add frozen mixed vegetables to canned or packaged soup.
- Try stir-frying vegetables with chicken or shrimp for dinner.
- For a new sandwich twist, fill a pita with chopped vegetables.
- Keep a stash of canned fruit (in natural juices) in your desk drawer or locker.
- Pack an extra piece of fruit in your lunch to save for mid-afternoon.
- Keep cut-up fresh vegetables in the refrigerator for a quick snack (make it easier and buy them pre-cut from the salad bar).
- Have a glass of vegetable or tomato juice as a mid-morning snack.
- Keep a bowl of fruit on the kitchen counter.
- Take along raw baby carrots or fresh grapes to munch on in the car.